



## Mercury Management in School Facilities Service Departments

A Series of Best Management Practices

Most schools are phasing out their use of mercury. With this much-needed change, we have to properly manage all of this “toxic” waste. These reference documents were created to assist facilities services in disposing of mercury, and mercury containing devices.

### Items in school building maintenance departments that may contain mercury

Maintenance departments usually have many of the following mercury containing items: fluorescent lights, old thermostats, and batteries - mercury oxide/mercury zinc (prior to 1996), and all button cells.

### Why is mercury an environmental concern?

Mercury is highly toxic to humans and wildlife. It accumulates in fish and other organisms inhabiting mercury-contaminated waters. Mercury builds up in the tissues of organisms higher up in the food chain, including humans.

### Health effects from exposure to mercury

Acute or short-term exposure includes lung damage, nausea, vomiting, skin and eye irritations.

Chronic or long-term exposure includes tremors, insomnia, weakness, memory loss, and headache.

### How to properly dispose of any mercury-containing devices

Because it is necessary to dispose of mercury properly, it is best to ask for help in removing the chemical. Contact NHPPP for assistance (see bottom of this page), our website includes helpful links to mercury related recycling centers.

### Mercury Spill Clean up Procedures

In the event of a mercury spill, please contact DES Special Investigations Section (603) 271-3899.

**VENTILATE** and **EVACUATE** area where spill occurred

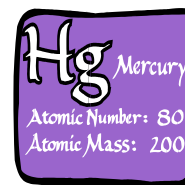
**DO NOT** vacuum up spilled mercury

**DO NOT** pour mercury down the drain, or in the trash.

Use latex or rubber gloves when cleaning up spill

Use cardboard, squeegee or eyedropper to collect all glass and mercury

Place all contaminated material in a doubled plastic bag for proper disposal.



## New Hampshire Pollution Prevention in Schools Project

<http://www.des.nh.gov/nhPPP/Schools/> or call (603) 271-0878

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